

Taiko essay sample

[Education](#), [Teaching](#)



Introduction

Ethnic music is something magnificent and different. When listening to it, one can feel support, cheering, sadness and sympathy. Sometimes ethnic music can bring a person to the highest tops, as well as reveal the most hidden secrets of a culture. In my opinion, ethnic music is something that makes the modern world not so cold and indifferent. The point is that modern music is alike: songs have the same rhythm lyrics have the same rhymes. Everything is similar. On the other hand, there is ethnic music.

Ethnic music is like a breath fresh air. There are so many different kinds of ethnic music, as many different peoples live on the planet.

Nowadays, thanks to the Internet connection and different websites, people are able to listen to different ethnic music. However, there are those, who attend concerts and performances. The globalization is everywhere. Ethnic music is globalized, as well. In this essay, I will show how the globalization changed Taiko, the ethnic drum music of Japan. The essay I will divide into three parts. The first part I will devote to the explanation what Taiko music is. The second part of the essay will be devoted to my personal reflection on the Taiko performance I have attended. In the third part, I will analyze all the findings and show the development of Taiko music in terms of globalization.

Taiko

Taiko is a family of drums used in Japan. Taiko means "big drum". Most likely, these drums were imported from China or Korea between III and IX centuries, and after the IX century were made by local craftsmen. They were used in Shinto, the worship of the god Susanoo wind. They are used to this

day in folk and classical music . Drums of Japan are collectively called taiko , in design , they are divided into two large groups : bö Dyke , whose membrane is rigidly fixed with nails without customization , and shime - Daiko , which can be configured using cords or screws . Hollow drum corps from a single piece of solid wood. On the play taiko sticks called Batey . To be- daiko are about Dyke and co- Daiko . With cords adjusted so - daiko , or Dyke , Kakko , outa - Daiko and tsudzumi. Under the same name musical ensembles of drummers , a national symbol of Japan are known. Particularly popular they have become in the 1970s , when a group of drummers began performing at venues outside of Japan . They expressed the spirit of the samurai : discipline , high physical and mental preparation, coordination groups and perfectionism . In contrast to Western practices , the visual part of the presentation Taiko no less important than the acoustic impact . Kata movements constitute an inseparable part of the game on taiko and customs originate from court submissions. Kata binds drum and drummer creates a relationship between the performer and the instrument.

Personal reflection

I would like to point out that there were not many people. Perhaps, because not all of the Americans are interested in such culture. Moreover, there were many Japanese. When the performance began, the stage remained dark for quite some time. Then the some lights appeared and we saw the drummers. There were six musicians standing in a circle. They were dressed in traditional Japanese clothes. The picture below shows how the drummers looked like:

Drummers' shows have always amazed me. I liked to watch how drummers

move hands, going up and down from one drum to another from cymbal to cymbal. However, this very show was unique. All drummers moved synchronically. The sound was going up and down. They could make it louder or quieter. During the performance, the musicians shouted some phrases and words in, I guess, Japanese. Such practice helped to feel the atmosphere better, as well as the music itself.

The music is fast and dynamic. I should admit that, although, I was listening to drums for half an hour, it did not tire me. I mean, when listening to such music for a long time, the ear gets tired. The pulsing beat may even hurt the ear. However, after attending this very performance, I felt filled with energy. When speaking about the beat, I should admit that it is difficult. Not every professional drummer can repeat it. At some point, it seems that you understand the beat, how they make it and can imagine how you could make the same beat. However, only a moment later and you are confused by the beat difficulty again. On the one hand, it may sound disappointing. However, I should admit that the situation is the opposite: you realize how much can be learned and is inspired to learn.

Another thing that amazed me was the audience. I was sitting among Japanese who were cheering, as if they were at the concert of a pop star. It amazed me how much people love this music. I could not think that in the modern age someone can like ethnic music that much.

After the performance, I have interviewed the professor. In the interview, we talked much about what Taiko is and how one can become such a drummer. The professor said that, although nowadays, women can become Taiko drummers, as well, more than a century ago, only men were allowed to play

the drums. The professor is playing Taiko for almost forty years already. This fact, perhaps, amazed me the most. The professor said that his father was playing Taiko, as well. That is why he became the musician. Nowadays, he teaches Taiko, and confesses that it is a rather difficult task.

Taiko globalization

When talking to the professor, I have found out that previously, Taiko has been played on special occasions:

“ Originally Taiko was played only as a means of communication and keeping at beat to chanting in temples and played in festivals for bountiful harvests in the rural areas. Today, almost any situation or event. Cultural/multi-cultural events, community gatherings, conferences/conventions, grand openings, wedding receptions, birthday parties, etc. The Taiko is used in Shinto shrines in sacred ceremonies and Buddhist temples in keeping time to chanting and to make announcements in training monasteries.”

As we see, before Taiko was used only for ceremonials. However, nowadays, Taiko musicians are rather popular among the Japanese. The Taiko drummers groups organize festivals, performances, courses where the musicians teach all the willing to play Taiko drums. The peculiarity of the San Jose Taiko drummers group is that they used electronic music during the performances. There are several musicians with mixing consoles, who perform electronic music. On one hand, it amazes. The point is that the San Jose Taiko drummers have found a unique way of combining modern and ethnic music. On the other hand, it is rather scarring. When looking at such a performance, one begins to fear that in some moment, the drummers may be gone and only electronic music will be left.

Conclusion

In the essay, I tried to show the Taiko drumming in the context of modern globalization process. I think that it is amazing when musicians can combine modern music with ancient. I have attended the performance of the San Jose Taiko drummers group and found such music amazing and even magnificent. It musicians could transfer the atmosphere of ancient times to the listeners. On the other hand, electronic music helped to outline the atmosphere, as well as show that modern and ancient can be combine rather well.

Bibliography

Bender, Shawn. Taiko Boom. SAGE, 2012.

Heidi Varian, Seiichi Tanaka. The Way of Taiko. Stone Bridge Press, 2005.

Leonard C. Holvik, Jackson H. Bailey. Japanese Music: Another Tradition, Other Sounds. Earlham College Press, 1990.

Thompson, Oscar, and Nicolas Slonimsky. The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians. 1947.